

FITZROY FORUM

“One River for All of Us, Black and White”

Communique

9 AUGUST 2019

- Stakeholders and contributing observers, including WA Government representatives, attended the Fitzroy Forum, organised by the WA Government, at Fitzroy River Lodge in Fitzroy Crossing on 8 and 9 August 2019.
- The Forum commenced with a Welcome to Country delivered by Mary Aiken, Bunuba elder, and Brendaleen Shaw, Gooniyandi elder.
- Dr Anne Poelina (Chair, Martuwarra Fitzroy River Council) and Alastair Shields (Independent Chair, Fitzroy Valley Stakeholder Group) were the Co-Chairs of the Forum, supported by Bardy McFarlane, Fitzroy Valley Stakeholder Convener.
- The Forum had wide ranging and constructive discussions concerning:
 - The potential for a shared vision and shared values concerning sustainable development and appropriate protection measures;
 - National Heritage Place Listing under the EPBC Act;
 - Water resource and extraction opportunities in the Fitzroy Valley Catchment area;
 - A proposal to create buffer zones;
 - The CSIRO Northern Australia Water Assessment report;
 - Existing Australian Government and State Government approval processes
- The Forum resolved that there is broad agreement on the following principles to apply if there is a Development Proposal in the Fitzroy Catchment:
 - Sincere engagement between proponents and traditional owners to achieve mutually acceptable outcomes.
 - Early engagement and communication with Traditional Owners.
 - Acknowledgement of the WA Govt position of no dams of Fitzroy River and tributaries (noting that there is a need for clarification on this).
 - Groundwater and surface water extraction and off-stream storage may be considered, together with pumping out of the river at high-flow.
 - There is a proposal for a buffer zone (further work to be done before agreed).
 - Rigorous compliance with existing approval requirements (e.g. National Heritage Listing, EPBC Act and State approval processes).
 - Decisions must utilise western science and Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge/Indigenous science.

- Any approvals should contain conditions to protect the environment as per existing approval requirements.
- Desire to achieve/leverage improved social, cultural and economic outcomes (aim for a higher good and all aspects considered) for the community and prevent negative social and economic impacts.
- Desire for certainty of processes and timelines, working in good faith.
- Effective monitoring, compliance and regulation.